

meeting a higher standard.” In other words, we’re holding people to standards. So I believe the No Child Left Behind Act honors local control of schools.

One of the classic debates that takes place at the local level is what curriculum to use. I’m sure some of you have been through the classic reading curriculum debates. They raged hot and heavy in the State of Texas for a while. And you’d have, this side would be yelling at that side. One way to make sure that your curriculum works is to measure. If a child is passing reading by using this curriculum, and another child is not passing reading when they use another curriculum, it provides a useful tool for the local newspaper, for example, to say, “We told you so, the curriculum is not working; or we told you so, the curriculum is working.”

There’s got to be accountability in the public school system. If you do not diagnose a problem, you can never solve the problem. And one of the things about No Child Left Behind which is important is that when we diagnose a reading problem early, there is supplemental service money to help that child be brought up to speed. That’s why it’s called No Child Left Behind. We believe every child can learn—every child. And therefore, this is a program that says we want accountability for the taxpayers’ money. We’ll provide extra help early on when we find a child who needs extra help. And it’s working. That’s the other thing that I would tell people. How do I know? Because we measure. There’s an achievement gap in America that is not right. When you measure at the fourth grade, Anglo kids did fine; African American and Latino kids didn’t. And that’s not fair, and it’s not right. And so we’ve essentially ended social promotion in the early grades and said, we’re going to correct problems. And it’s working because that gap is narrowing. And the reason I can say that is because we measure.

Interestingly enough, when you, kind of, compare measurements internationally in math and science or math, we’re doing fine in the fourth grade. We’re falling off in the eighth grade. And so what I want to do is to apply the same rigor for reading that we did in the early grades to math in junior high. So in the eighth grades we get those scores

and, kind of, lay that foundation for the sciences and the engineering—the physicists, so we can compete.

I’m a strong believer in No Child Left Behind. My Secretary of Education, my good buddy, Margaret Spellings, who helped me put a similar program in place in the State of Texas, is now the Secretary of Education. She’s obviously listening to complaints about certain aspects of AYP. But we’re not going to undermine the basic tenet that says we believe in high standards; we believe every child can learn; and we’re going to measure. And when we see the status quo is unacceptable, we’ll challenge the status quo. That’s what you need to, and I’m sure you are doing that. It ought to be unacceptable to opinion makers when you find illiteracy. And you ought to demand change, not only for your own self interest but for the sake of this country. And so thanks for asking the question.

I’ve got to go. Listen, I’ll be a diplomatic problem if I don’t get over there on time. [Laughter] I’m honored you’d have me. Thanks for letting me come by and visit with you. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 a.m. at the Wyndham Washington Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Jerry Reppert, president, and Jerry Tidwell, vice president, National Newspaper Association; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; A.Q. Khan, former head of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons program; U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad; Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Ayman al-Zawahiri, founder of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and senior Al Qaida associate; President Vladimir Putin and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov of Russia; Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco of Louisiana; Mayor C. Ray Nagin of New Orleans, LA; President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran; and President Alejandro Toledo of Peru.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Alejandro Toledo of Peru March 10, 2006

President Bush. I am very pleased to welcome *mi amigo* back to the Oval Office. I have grown to admire President Toledo for his strength of character, his clear vision, his willingness to make difficult decisions, even

sometimes when the popularity polls suggest he do something differently. Leadership requires strength of character, the willingness to make tough choices.

I admire my friend's record. Peru is on the verge of elections, and he'll be passing on to a successor a stable economy and stable political process. And that is a wonderful legacy—the first President in 50 years to be able to say, “I'm passing on a stable economy and a stable political process.”

I admire the growth rate, the economic growth rate of Peru. It's the strongest growth rate in South America. I always admire this about my friend—he is—he says that one of his biggest goals was to reduce poverty, and he recognizes that while progress is being made—a lot of progress—that more needs to be done. He cares deeply about the people of Peru. He's a man of—he's got a *corazon gigante*.

I have enjoyed working with him. We accomplished some important missions, one of which was a free trade agreement—free trade agreement between Peru and the United States was the result of his leadership and his vision.

And so it's with mixed emotions that I meet my friend. I'm pleased to be in the presence of an accomplished person, somebody who's led, and I'm going to miss working with him, because he's been a partner in peace.

And so, Mr. President, welcome to the Oval Office. It's an honor to have you back, and it's a joy to be with you. Welcome.

President Toledo. Thank you very much. You're very generous.

Let me say very briefly, Peru and Latin America are partners with the United States in more than just a free trade agreement. It's very important, the free trade agreement, because it generates jobs and enables to continue the sustained rates of economic growth, to reduce poverty. But we are also partners in spreading the democratic values in the region. We're also partners in the fight against narcotrafficking and terrorism. We are partners in the search of peace in the world. We are partners in trying to inculcate in the region that democracy is the imperfect way, but it's the best way that we have. We are partners in trying to convey the idea that

being elected democratically is good, but it's insufficient; we need to govern democratically.

And I'm sure that after I finish and pass away the power to the next President, the Peruvians and Latin Americans do not want to go through this cycle that creates instability, that does not attract capital investment to continue growth, to generate jobs, to invest more in health, nutrition, and education, and to reduce poverty.

Mr. President, partnership means to focus seriously and deliver results in what we believe, but also means to have the degrees of tolerance to entertain our differences. And that's democracy, as practiced over here.

It has been a very productive relationship. I also have mixed feelings. And I would say publicly, you are my friend now, you will be my friend after I'm not President, and you will be my friend when you are no longer President. [Laughter]

The United States is a market of 290 million people, with an average income of \$37,000 a year. It's a market that I will leave for the next President, and that means jobs, because that has to do with poverty. I don't believe in giving away fish, just a decent job and a quality education and health.

Mr. President, I hope that we soon will sign the free trade agreement and will continue working for the approval of that free trade agreement in our respective Congress.

I went through a tough time, but I'm stubborn. I'm a believer, a strong believer in my convictions. And I'm sure that the wisdom of Peruvians will, on April 9th—or May—will elect someone that believes in democracy, that believes in the stability to continue on, to build on our accomplishment, but correct our mistakes; that we cannot go back and forth, because the poor people cannot afford to wait so much.

Thank you very, very much for receiving us today. It has been a very productive meeting. I want to thank my collaborators. I'm not going away yet, I still have 5 more months. [Laughter] And we will continue working. We have done a good job, I think, of exchanging productive ideas in the meetings of APEC. APEC represents around 57 percent of the world economy, 46 percent of the world trade. And so in 2008, the next

Peruvian President, he or she will receive you in Peru as a President of the APEC.

Thank you very, very much.

President Bush. *Mi amigo, gracias.* Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:53 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on the Resignation of Gale Norton as Secretary of the Interior *March 10, 2006*

Gale Norton has been a strong advocate for the wise use and protection of our Nation's natural resources and a valuable member of my administration for more than 5 years. As the first woman Secretary of the Interior, she served the Nation well with her vision for cooperative conservation, protection and improvement of our national parks and public lands, and environmentally responsible energy development on public lands and waters. She was instrumental in establishing my Healthy Forests Initiative that has helped make communities safer from catastrophic fire, while improving wildlife habitat. Gale played an influential role in shaping the Nation's offshore and onshore energy policies to help enhance America's domestic production. When Hurricane Katrina devastated the gulf coast region, she played a leading role in my administration's efforts to restore badly needed offshore energy production to avoid further supply disruption and higher energy costs for consumers. Because of her leadership and thoughtful attention to management, repairs, and maintenance issues, Americans will be able to better enjoy our great national parks and wildlife refuges for generations to come. I appreciate Gale's dedicated service to our country, and I wish Gale and John all the best.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest an-

nounced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

March 4

In the morning, at the U.S. Ambassador's residence in Islamabad, Pakistan, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, the President of Pakistan's residence, he and Mrs. Bush participated in an arrival ceremony with President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan. Then, in the Pink Room at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, he met with President Musharraf.

Later in the morning, in the Reception Hall at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, the President participated in a briefing on the Pakistani earthquake and reconstruction efforts.

In the afternoon, in the President's Dining Room at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, the President and Mrs. Bush had lunch with President Musharraf and his wife, Sebha Musharraf. Later, at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, the President greeted U.S. Embassy staff. Then, in the Raphael Memorial Gardens of the U.S. Embassy, he participated in a cricket clinic with Pakistani youth.

In the evening, in the Reception Hall at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, the President and Mrs. Bush attended a performance. Later, they returned to Washington, DC, arriving the following morning.

March 6

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, he dropped by a meeting of the Academic Competitiveness Council.

In the afternoon, the President participated in a briefing on Hurricane Katrina recovery and rebuilding efforts along the gulf coast.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Alejandro Toledo of Peru to the White House on March 10.

March 7

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov of Russia.